

# TOWN OF HIGHGATE

## Planning Commission Mtg.

September 20, 2016 @ 6pm

### Approved Minutes

*NOTE: All actions taken are unanimous unless otherwise stated.*

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

Richard Wilkens opened up the meeting at 6pm.

Present for this meeting were:

**Planning Commission Board Members;** Richard Wilkens – Chair; Luc Dupuis – Vice Chair; Larry Simmons; Bruce Ryan; Woody Rouse;  
*absent – Barbara Chevalier*

**Town of Highgate staff:** Heidi Britch-Valenta – Planning & Zoning Administrator; Wendi Dusablon – PC & DRB Clerk

**Public / Other:** Betsy Fournier – RiseVT; Stacy Carpenter – Dept. of Health; Evangeline LaRocque; Chris Uzell; Karen Fortin (arrived @ 7:20pm)

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion by Bruce Ryan to approve the minutes from August 30, 2016, as written. The motion was seconded by Rich Wilkens – **APPROVED.**

III. **CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

We will discuss the sidewalk updates as more people arrive that are not here yet. The PC moved on to discussion regarding the CIP. Several contractors have been in to look at the municipal roof. There was discussion about the water damage already done upstairs and the mold in the highway department office and bathroom area. The roof needs to be repaired before we remediate any mold issues. The lowest estimate we received to repair the valleys of the municipal roof was \$10,000.00. The damage appears to be due to the valley areas being nailed, not screwed, which went through the ice and water shield. The roof replacement and modified entry way can be removed from the CIP with regard to the arena. For the fire department, \$40,000.00 should stay for truck replacement, and the floor repair of \$60,000.00 is also a necessity. There was some discussion on the fire department floor and the plan for core samples to be taken and temporarily patched until we can secure funding. Rich will speak with Andy King regarding the PWD items. The line items for the road side mower, grater and loader should remain, but other items we can work with Andy to trim and distribute towards the future. The ADA modifications were discussed. Some items are necessary and some are not. To make the front entrance, rear entrance, bathrooms, doorways and signage ADA compliant is approximately \$80,000.00. The funds towards the Machia Road bridge replacement are also a necessity, as that is scheduled for replacement in 2018. The library trustees are not yet ready to propose anything with regard to the library relocation, so that can be removed for now. There was discussion on the transfer station slope stabilization project. There is \$57,000.00 in a capital reserve for this already. We will continue to look for grant funding for engineering work to fully understand the situation there. Heidi gave some background on former landslide sites and work that has already been completed. Rich wants everyone to really think about the CIP before the next meeting on Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> and we need to further look at the PWD section with Andy.

IV. **SIDEWALK DISCUSSION & UPDATES**

Heidi began by noting that the sidewalk committee is looking for new members. Betsy Fournier from RiseVT and Stacy Carpenter from the Department of Health are here to support Highgate in any way they can. The Lamkin Street project has been ongoing for several years. We applied for a grant in 2012, received \$250,000.00 in grant funding in 2013 for the sidewalk and allowed funds for the match. This was all approved in 2014 and funds committed and formal motions were made at Selectboard meetings. The Swanton Arts Council is making an art cart for us to help advertise projects and it can be moved around town as needed. Lots of people are very excited about having sidewalks, but there is also a very negative crowd. It is important to

remind people that this has already been funded. Larry believes residents are confused and are having a hard time separating projects. The Lamkin Street sidewalk project is a done deal. Betsy is working with the school on ways to make our village more pedestrian friendly, and noted there is a lot we can do without spending a great deal of money. Rich wants to keep the open house simple. Heidi will ask NRPC to help with large copies of maps and other documents. Heidi shared a flyer put out by the State of Vermont regarding quick facts supporting improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements. There is a positive economic impact. The town has 28 letters in support of sidewalks. We have heard time and time again “why do we have to change, we haven’t had any accidents” – this statement is not true. Betsy added that Safe Routes to Schools looks at where kids live in proximity to the village and also sent out a survey to parents on how their students commute to school. Evangeline LaRocque shared that she has often had to wait several minutes before she could safely cross from the municipal park over to her home on Route 78, and then she had to move quickly. Heidi added that this first sidewalk project will also get us our first crosswalk on Route 78. Additionally, the Selectboard has approved a crosswalk on Gore Road. The crosswalk on Route 78 will also have a flashing beacon light included. The town would have to approve putting another flashing beacon light at the Gore Road crosswalk. Lamkin Street was selected for this first leg of sidewalks because it is highly populated and has the largest tracts of undeveloped land. We will see more growth in that area. Karen Fortin arrived @ 7:20pm and reverted back to the CIP discussion. They are confident they can patch the roof at the library. It won't be pretty, but it will buy time until decisions are made regarding the relocation of HPL. She will have more information for the October PC meeting. Liza has an estimate for a full roof replacement that Karen can get to Rich also. Several people that said they would be here for the sidewalk discussion that are not here tonight. Heidi and Betsy reiterated some earlier discussion with Karen. Highgate Elementary open house is Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>. Rich would like to attend regarding sidewalks. HPL plans to be very active at the school open house and municipal open house.

V. **OPEN HOUSE EVENT – NOVEMBER 15, 2016**

The date is set for Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup> from 5-7pm here at the municipal building. Rich has been working with local businesses to donate food and beverages. The focus of the open house will be on the upcoming Lamkin Street sidewalk project, the CIP and the ADA modifications. The library trustees will be focusing on getting a pulse on what people think about a new library. Heidi will have surveys available for people to rank projects and other miscellaneous questions that will help us in the future. There was discussion on advertising the event. We will advertise in the St. Albans Messenger, town website, town FaceBook page, flyers in various locations around town, digital message board, and a postcard mailing was also discussed. The mailing should be directed to registered voters, one per household and go out in early November. Wendi will work on this and have something to present at the Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> PC meeting to see if they want to move forward.

VI. **OTHER BUSINESS & UPDATES**

ACT250 is mandating a paperless application process. Motion by Bruce Ryan to sign the delegation of authority by the Planning Commission to the Town Clerk to accept service for the purpose of ACT250 application notices. The motion was seconded by Larry Simmons – **APPROVED.**

VII. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Bruce Ryan to adjourn the meeting @ 8:16pm. The motion was seconded by Larry Simmons – **APPROVED.**

Minutes respectfully submitted by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Planning & DRB Clerk \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wendi Dusablon Date

Minutes approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_, Planning Comm. – Chair \_\_\_\_\_  
 Richard Wilkens Date